

Environmental Review of Fish Introduction

Description of water body and action:

Name: Lower Hassler Reservoir

County: Fergus

Legal Description: T17N R18E S11

To stock rainbow trout or largemouth bass in a privately owned pond. Owner has agreed to allow reasonable public access. The pond is about 1 surface acre and 10 acre-feet. Maximum depth is about 12 feet. This pond has been recently reconstructed and may be marginal to over-winter fish. It will be monitored for survival to determine if stocking is worthwhile over the long term. Pond is located about 2 miles west of Hilger, Montana.

Name of the drainage where the pond is located:

The pond is located on an ephemeral tributary to Warm Spring Creek (Judith River). Warm Spring Creek is located about 6 miles downstream.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Rainbow trout or largemouth bass.

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes

Species of Special Concern in the drainage:

No Species of Special Concern are known from Warm Spring Creek or its tributaries. The Judith River contains blue sucker and burbot.

Risks:

Potential for impacts on the genetic structure of existing fish populations:

_____ None X Minor _____ Major

Comments: During extremely high water stocked fish could go over the spill-way toward Warm Spring Creek. It is unlikely that the stocked fish would have negative impacts on the genetics of non-native rainbow trout in Warm Spring Creek.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation:

 None _____ Minor _____ Major

The stocked fish will eat small fish in the pond if they are present. Fish probably cannot survive in the ephemeral drainages downstream of the pond.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction: _____None

 X Minor _____ Major

It is unlikely that there will be additional impacts.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location: ___None

X Minor ___ Major

It is unlikely stocked rainbow trout would reproduce in this pond or in downstream ephemeral drainages. Largemouth bass could potentially reproduce in the pond.

If necessary would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?

Yes the pond is small enough to chemically treat and will likely have winterkill problems during drought.

Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable?

No.

Other considerations: This pond is small and is only about 11.5 feet maximum depth. Summer or winter kill is possible.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action).

No action. There would not be a new opportunity for public fishing in Fergus County.

Describe and evaluate mitigation, stipulations or other control measures enforceable by the agency, if any.

Fish stocking will be a beneficial action.

List all agencies and individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction.

Area anglers

List all agencies and individuals who have been notified of this proposed introduction.

None

Based on this evaluation, is an EIS required YES/NO? If no explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed actions. No. Action expected to be minor.

EA prepared by: Anne Tews, Fisheries Biologist

Date: April 9, 2007 **Comments accepted until:** May 14, 2007

Comments should be sent to: Anne Tews, MFWP, P.O. Box 938, Lewistown, MT 59457:

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